Nellie T. [illegible]
Marlinton, W. Va.

April 18, 1940

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Chapter 4--Section 4--Part a-Rafting.

About fifty years ago there was no railroad along the Greenbrier River. Logs and material were transported by the waters of the Greenbrier. Timber was cut at the head or near the head of the river and further down. During the winter months, the logs were skidded to the river and piled up in big landings. They were fixed in a way that they would have to be kicked loose before they would tumble into the river.

Before spring an ark was built on the water. This would accommodate about seventy or eighty men, or whatever number was needed to make the drive. An ark was also built for the horses. When spring opened, men were hired to make the drive down the river. The men hired for the breaking up jams had to have experience. It sometimes took six or eight weeks to make the drive down the river to Ronceverte where it was sold into lumber.

An experienced man told of a trip he once made down the river to Ronceverte and a trick played on one of the teamsters. It seems that this certain teamster was always the first man to the table when the bell rang and he did full justice to his meals. Between the two arks, there was always a board laid for a walk, which would be so completely covered with foam before morning that it would be hard to tell whether there was a walk there or

not. They decided to give this particular teamster a bath. Before breakfast one morning, they removed the board from between the arks. Everyone had come across from the teamsters' ark except this one particular teamster who was the hero of the story. The breakfast bell rang and he made a dive for the table. He was somewhat of a reckless fellow and did not notice that the walk was gone. He made a dive for the table, gave a jump and fell into the river. He swam to the ark and crawled to the deck, very mad. The men kept from laughing as long as they could, but finally had to have a good laugh. He was pretty mad but finally joined in and they all had a hearty laugh.

From - Pocahontas Times. 1926

Samuel G. Smith
Hillsboro, W. Va.

INDUSTRY

Chapter 7.

Pocahontas County.

MIDDLE-FORK DRIVING COMPANY

In 1895 Withrow McClintic of Buckeye, Pocahontas County, then a farmer and stock buyer, took a contract from the Gauley Lumber Company, of Camden, now known as Camden-on-Gauley, to cut, skid and drive to Camden the timber on some 3000 to 4000 acres located on the Middle Fork of Williams River.

They cut the timber, ran it down a slide to the Middle Fork of Williams River, and from there into Gauley River that carried the logs to Camden-on-Gauley. Splash dams were constructed in Williams river to gather a tide to make high water so the logs would carry over shallow water. These dams were built of logs and reinforced inside the crib with rock; the ends of the logs were nailed together with iron spikes 2 to 3 feet long. In this crib were gates operated by levers.

When the water had gathered to a depth sufficient to raise the logs from the bottom of the river, the gates were opened and the tide carried the logs down the river until the tide ran low and there they would stop until a flood came or until the dam had filled to be let out again.

Often the logs were piled in the river 50 to 60 feet high and would jam and not start moving. When this happened the logs were

dynamited to loosen them up and start them down the river.

Mr. McClintic got part of his supplies from Ronceverte and Millboro, Va. These were brought in with wagons drawn by four horse teams. Trail was cut out a distance of 18 miles from Spruce Flat close to Buckeye and Mountain Lick Run on Williams River to the camp by way of Barlow Hacking. This trail is still known as the McClintic Trail. In going to the camp you crossed Williams River 23 times and Gauley one time, a very rough trail.

It took from four to five days to go to Millboro or Ronceverte and bring in groceries for the camp and feed for the horses.

McClintic employed from 35 to 45 men and used from 10 to 12 teams of horses.

The men were paid $32.00 per month, with board. The work was very dangerous, especially on the slides from the log landing to the river, and the driving of the logs down the river; however, the most serious of accidents were minor mashes, bruises and broken legs. McClintic was paid $5.75 per thousand to cut, skid, and drive to Gauley River. Most of the men were from Pocahontas County, but a few came in from Greenbrier County, and the State of Virginia. Part of this timber was in Webster County, close to Cowen.

Mr. McClintic did not get to finish the job due to trouble with the Gauley Company, but was at the job off and on for seven years, and came out in 1902.

They held back a percentage of his earnings until the job was completed. This ran up over $40,000. but Mr. McClintic got only $20,000. of this sum and moved all equipment out. From this time on he operated logging jobs and ran small saw mills of his own in different sections of the County and adjoining Counties.

Middle-Fork Driving Company

From 1895 until his death in 1931 Withrow McClintic, beyond any doubt, furnished employment to more men than any individual in Pocahontas County, as he at all times employed from 20 to 35 men at lumber manufacturing, putting out telephone poles, locust for pins, locust posts, mine props and any other timber he could find a market for.

Since his death several families have been forced to leave the community to find employment, as his payroll meant a lot to the Swago community in which he lived.

He was a large land owner, handled large numbers of sheep, cattle, horses and mules; therefore, he was a large tax payer.

(Information J. O. Morrison, Marlinton, W. Va.
Tom Hause, Buckeye, W. Va.
W. G. McKeever, Buckeye.)